

KAREN LEWIS YOUNG
Legislative District 3
Frederick County

Budget and Taxation Committee



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
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The Honorable Brian Feldman
The Honorable Cheryl Kagan
Education, Energy, & Environment Committee
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February 19th, 2025

SB0318 Higher Education - Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment
Program - Eligibility

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and esteemed members of this committee,

Maryland is facing a shortage of Veterinarians and Veterinary Technicians. SB318 will provide a solution to this crisis by adding Veterinarians and Veterinary Technicians to the incredibly successful Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program (LARP).

First, the goal of the LARP is to attract and cultivate high quality professionals here in Maryland. Second, the shortage of professional treatment options hurts families unable to find proper and affordable care for their pets, farmers' ability to care for their herds and stresses shelter resources.

Pets are family. They provide comfort, companionship, and therapy. This has been documented in numerous medical journals. When families have no other options, they turn to often understaffed, underequipped shelters in desperate bids for help, further exacerbating a shortage of resources.

Veterinarians also provide a crucial service to farmers throughout the State. They help farmers protect and grow the investments in herds and livestock. Beyond farmers, veterinarians provide crucial services in our other professional animal industries.

SB318 meets the goal of the LARP by requiring a veterinarian or veterinary technician to be employed in the State for at least five years, or volunteer at an animal shelter for a local government for at least 100 hours per year for at least three years. At the same time, this will help address shortages by making the field more attractive.

Please help pets, their people, and Maryland farmers by providing an incentive to encourage more practitioners to enter the profession and stay in Maryland. By adding Veterinarians and Veterinary Technicians to the list of qualified employment types, we ensure that Maryland remains competitive with surrounding states for this career field.

I urge a favorable report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Karen Lewis Young". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Senator Karen Lewis Young